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## COALITION CALLS FOR END TO ENDANGERED SPECIES LOOPHOLE

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A coalition of 19 organizations and 10 prominent scientists and conservationists, including many former state employees, are supporting a bill that would ensure protections for all federally-listed threatened and endangered species found in Maine.

[LD883: An Act to Protect Endangered Species Whose Life Cycles Include Maine Land or Waters](#) would require the Commissioners of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) and Marine Resources (DMR) to recommend state listing for all species of fish and wildlife listed as Threatened or Endangered pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973, and which inhabit land or waters in this state for any part of their life cycles. The proposed legislation covers all federally listed terrestrial and marine animal species, including birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates.

The purpose of the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to protect and recover imperiled native species and the ecosystems they depend on to prevent their extinction. Under the ESA, "Threatened" refers to species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future, and "Endangered" means a species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Wildlife extinctions world-wide are at an all-time high" said Senator David Miramant, sponsor of the bill. "We hope LD 883 will close some management loopholes in Maine and help bring a number of our species back from the brink," he added.

Maine is one of only ten states (and the only one in the northeast) that does not mandate or recommend state-level listing of federally-listed species. "From 1979 to 1996, Maine's definition of "Endangered" under the Maine Endangered Species Act (MESA) included federally-listed species. In 1996, LD 164 took responsibility for listing away from scientists and gave it to the commissioners of IFW and DMR and the legislature. Twenty-five years later it's time we gave it back," said Ed Friedman, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay Chairman.

There are currently 16 federally-listed Threatened and Endangered birds, mammals, reptiles, and fish found in Maine. Of those, only ten, or 60%, are listed at the state level. The six federally-listed species found in Maine that are not listed at the state level include the red knot, Canada lynx, blue whale, green turtle, Atlantic salmon, and Atlantic sturgeon. Dwayne Shaw, Executive Director of the Downeast Salmon Federation noted Atlantic salmon are one imperiled species falling through the cracks in management and recovery. "By most estimates, there are currently fewer than 100 returning adult Atlantic salmon actually born in the wild of wild parents. We are obligated to future generations to ensure this iconic fish survives," Shaw said.

"There is no biological reason for Maine not to list a species that U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service has listed as Threatened or Endangered," said Emily Bastian, Vice Chair of Native Fish Coalition. "If they are threatened or endangered at the national level, they are by default threatened or endangered at the state level. Inclusion of all threatened or endangered species under either MESA or the Maine Marine Endangered Species Act of 2003 will help improve management and restoration efforts across state agencies."

This legislation is supported by the following organizations and individuals:

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**Topher Browne**, Journalist and author of “Atlantic Salmon Magic”  
**Mark Des Meules**, Former Science & Stewardship Director for TNC VT, Former ED Land for Maine’s Future, Maine Atlantic Salmon Collaborative  
**Joan Garner Trial**, Ph.D., Retired MDIFW Fisheries Biologist, Atlantic Salmon Commission, DMR Bureau Sea Run Fisheries  
**Albert M. Manville II**, Ph.D., Retired Senior Wildlife Biologist USFWS, Certified Wildlife Biologist for The Wildlife Society  
**Paul Nickerson**, Retired USFWS and co-author of the federal rule listing Atlantic salmon in Maine  
**Ray “Bucky” Owen**, Ph.D., Former MDIFW Commissioner  
**Catherine Schmitt**, Journalist and author of “The President's Salmon: Restoring the King of Fish and its Home Waters”  
**Matthew Scott**, Emeritus, AFS, AIFRB; Retired Chief Biologist Maine DEP and former Deputy Commissioner MDIFW  
**Mark Whiting**, Ph.D., Retired DEP Biologist for DEP Salmon Rivers Program

